



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2011

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Hantavirus Found In South Bay

Use Bleach and Mops to Clean Up After Rodents, Don't Sweep or Vacuum Droppings

A deer mouse trapped during routine monitoring last week in Chula Vista has tested positive for the potentially-deadly hantavirus.

Fifty-two rodents have tested positive for hantavirus in the county this year, compared to 21 in 2010. Hantavirus can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), which begins with flu-like symptoms but can grow into severe breathing difficulties and even death.

"Deer mice typically avoid contact with people," said Jack Miller, director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "But this cold weather may drive them inside looking for warmth, food and shelter."

Infected rodents rarely pose a danger to people when they are in the wild. But when rodents infest homes and garages, people can contract hantavirus by inhaling dust particles from rodent droppings and nesting materials that contain the virus. There is no treatment, vaccine or cure for hantavirus infections, which are deadly in 36 percent of cases according to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention .

The best way to prevent the disease is to keep mice out of houses, garages and sheds by sealing holes larger than the size of a dime, County officials said.

For more information contact the County Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit <http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/pests/hantavirus.html>. Watch: "[Hantavirus - The Airborne Menace.](#)"

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How to Avoid Exposure to Hantavirus:

- Eliminate rodent infestations immediately.
- Avoid rodent infested areas. Do not stir up dust or materials that may be contaminated with feces and urine.
- Clean up rodent droppings and urine using the wet cleaning method described below.

Use “Wet-Cleaning” Methods To Prevent Inhaling The Virus:

- **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM INFESTED AREAS.**
- Ventilate affected area by opening doors and windows for at least 30 minutes.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 percent bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water), or other full strength disinfectant onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps, and surrounding areas and let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop.
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.

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